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ABSTRACT

The emerging philosophy of Indian control of Indian education is the focus of this booklet. It embraces the belief that education should be controlled by the community and is most effective if it involves the community in the education process. Further, education should utilize the concept of cultural relevance to obtain its academic ends and must encompass traditional patterns of learning which emphasize independence, self-reliance, observation, discovery, practicality, and a respect for nature. Goals of this movement are stated as having more Indian people working in all aspects of the educational system and employing only staff that is sensitive to the new philosophy. Another goal is stated as providing a curriculum and materials that will develop and nurture a positive self-image of the learner as an individual and as a member of the Indian race. A curriculum to implement these goals is then outlined with objectives and planned results in the areas of language, social studies, communication skills, native studies, materials, adult studies and pre-kindergarten studies. It is concluded that as a result of this curriculum design, schools could be viewed as meaningful and community-centered institutions providing offerings to people of all ages and as belonging to the community, not just to the teachers. (AN)

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HOW INDIANS VIEW EDUCATION

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BY:

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WE BELIEVE IN OBTAINING AN EDUCATION THAT RESPECTS AND ENHANCES OUR IDENTITY, PERMITTING US TO RETAIN THOSE ASPECTS OF OUR CULTURE WHICH ARE MEANINGFUL TO US, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, LEARNING THE CULTURE OF THE DOMINANT SOCIETY FROM WHICH WE CAN CHOOSE THOSE ASPECTS ESSENTIAL FOR ADEQUATE FUNCTIONING IN THE MODERN WORLD. WE BELIEVE IN EDUCATION AS A PREPARATION FOR TOTAL LIVING AND AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING US WITH A FREE CHOICE OF WHERE TO LIVE AND WORK. WE BELIEVE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM MUST BE DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE TOTAL COMMUNITY BY INCLUDING OFFERINGS TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

OUR PHILOSOPHY EMBRACES THE CONCEPT OF INDIAN CONTROL OF INDIAN EDUCATION. WE BELIEVE:

1) EDUCATION SHOULD BE CONTROLLED BY THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES.

2) EDUCATION IS MOST EFFECTIVE IF IT INVOLVES THE COMMUNITY IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS.

3) EDUCATION IS MOST EFFECTIVE IF IT UTILIZES THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL RELEVANCE TO FURTHER ITS ACADEMIC ENDS.

4) EDUCATION MUST EMCOMPASS TRADITIONAL PATTERNS OF LEARNING WHICH EMPHASIZE:

   A) INDEPENDENCE

   B) SELF-RELIANCE

   C) OBSERVATION

   D) DISCOVERY

E) PRACTICALITY (EMPERICAL)

F) RESPECT FOR NATURE

5) EDUCATION IS PROGRESSIVE AND NOT REGRESSIVE, THEREFORE, FAILURE SHOULD BE VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN.

OUR PHILOSOPHY IS RECOGNIZED AS A BROAD FRAMEWORK INTO WHICH WE INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING GENERAL GOALS:

1) TO HAVE MORE INDIAN PEOPLE WORKING IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

2) TO UTILIZE THE COMMUNITY AND ITS PEOPLE AS RESOURCES TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

3) TO PROVIDE PROGRAMMING AS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

4) TO EMPLOY ONLY STAFF THAT IS SENSITIVE TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN EDUCATION.

5) TO PROVIDE A CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS THAT WILL DEVELOP AND NURTURE A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE OF THE LEARNER AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS A MEMBER OF THE INDIAN RACE.

WITH THIS PHILOSOPHY AND THESE GOALS IN FOCUS, THE FOLLOWING WILL SERVE AS EXAMPLES OF HOW WE INTERPRET THESE INTO PRACTICAL METHODS:

1. CURRICULUM:

A) LANGUAGE

OBJECTIVE: 1) TO PROVIDE THE NATIVE LANGUAGE-SPEAKING CHILD WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE HIS OWN LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM OF LEARNING, PARTICULARLY IN HIS EARLY SCHOOL YEARS AND TO INTRODUCE HIM TO THE ENGLISH

LANGUAGE THROUGH THE APPROACH OF BEING TAUGHT "ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE."

II) TO PROVIDE THE BILINGUAL CHILD WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP HIS NATIVE LANGUAGE AS WELL AS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

III) TO PROVIDE THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHILD WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN HIS NATIVE LANGUAGE.

RESULT: 1) COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GENERATIONS WILL BE MAINTAINED AND ENHANCED.

2) RESPECT FOR LANGUAGE (CULTURE) WILL BE MAINTAINED.

3) LEARNING PER SE, WILL NOT BE JEOPARDIZED BECAUSE OF LACK OF FACILITY WITH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

LANGUAGE IS THE PRINCIPAL MEANS BY WHICH CULTURE IS ACCUMULATED, SHARED AND TRANSMITTED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

B) SOCIAL STUDIES

OBJECTIVE: I) TO RECOGNIZE THE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE WITH WHICH THE CHILD ENTERS SCHOOL AND TO BUILD UPON THIS KNOWLEDGE AND NOT BESIDE IT. E.G. IN THE PRIMARY GRADES IN DISCUSSION OF "THE FAMILY," TEACHER MUST BE AWARE OF THE INDIANS "EXTENDED FAMILY" CONCEPT.

II) TO PRESENT AN ACCOUNT OF HISTORY IN AN ACCURATE AND POSITIVE SENSE. HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIAN PEOPLE TO CANADIAN SOCIETY MUST BE EMPHASIZED. TRUE HISTORY MUST BE REVEALED AT ALL LEVELS.

III) TO PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE, INDIANS' EVENTS OF THE PAST FOR THE PURPOSE OF UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT SITUATION.

IV) AT EVERY STAGE, TO BUILD UPON THAT WHICH IS FAMILIAR TO THE CHILD THROUGH HIS EXPERIENCE AND MOVING TO RELATED AREAS THAT WILL BROADEN HIS OUTLOOK.

RESULT:
1) ENHANCEMENT OF SELF-IMAGE
2) ENHANCE IMAGE OF HIMSELF AS AN INDIAN
3) EXPAND HIS KNOWLEDGE

THE NON-WHITE MINORITY MENTIONED MOST IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEXT-BOOKS IS THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN. IT IS BAD ENOUGH THAT ANY GROUP SHOULD BE SUBJECTED TO PREJUDICIAL TREATMENT, BUT THE FACT THAT INDIANS ARE THE NATIVE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY AND THAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO READ THESE TEXTS COMPOUNDS THE IMMORALITY OF SUCH TREATMENT.

C) COMMUNICATION SKILLS

OBJECTIVE: I) TO MAKE THE LEARNING OF SKILLS IN SPEAKING, READING, AND WRITING RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL. CHILDREN MUST LEARN THESE SKILLS THROUGH CONTEXTS FAMILIAR TO THEM. IT IS MUCH EASIER TO DISCUSS, TO READ, AND TO WRITE ABOUT FAMILIAR CONCEPTS, THAN IT IS OF UNKNOWN CONCEPTS SUCH AS ARE OFTEN PRESENTED IN TEXTBOOKS.

II) TO CORRELATE THE LEARNING OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH OTHER SUBJECTS. E.G. IN MANUAL ARTS, AN ELDERLY INDIAN GENTLEMAN MAY BE EMPLOYED TO WORK WITH THE TEACHER IN BUILDING A BIRCH-BARK CANOE, SNOWSHOES, A WIGWAM, ETC. MANY POSSIBILITIES ALSO EXIST IN HOME ECONOMICS AND IN ARTS AND CRAFTS. CHILDREN AT ALL LEVELS COULD GAIN FROM SUCH A PROJECT. COMMUNITY PEOPLE ARE THE SCHOOLS' MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE. THEY CAN PROVIDE THE BASE FOR LEARNING IN MOST, IF NOT ALL, SUBJECT AREAS.

RESULT: 1) TO GAIN THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE FREELY AND THEREBY BE ABLE TO GUIDE HIS OWN DESTINY.

2) TO ENHANCE HIS IMAGE AS AN INDIAN BY HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SKILLS OF HIS FOREFATHERS WHO KNEW HOW TO ADAPT TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT, E.G. USE OF BIRCH-BARK CANOE.

COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE ARE INSEPARABLE.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE IS CONSIDERED PRIMARY.

SOME OF THE GREATEST ORATORS OF ALL TIME WERE INDIAN PEOPLE.

D) NATIVE STUDIES

OBJECTIVE: 1) TO PROVIDE A COMBINATION OF A) DISCRETE SUBJECTS

IN INDIAN STUDIES AND B) A FOUNDATION FOR THE OVERALL CURRICULUM OF THE SCHOOL. DISCRETE SUBJECTS COULD INCLUDE INDIAN HISTORY, LANGUAGE, MUSIC, LITERATURE, ARTS AND CRAFTS, DANCE, ETC. THE DISCRETE SUBJECT APPROACH IS BEST INTRODUCED TO THE THIRTEEN YEAR-OLD OR APPROXIMATELY GRADE 7 LEVEL.

II) TO INVOLVE THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS BY ACTUAL PARTICIPATION. THESE PEOPLE ARE BEST QUALIFIED TO TEACH THE COURSES PERTAINING TO INDIANS.

III) TO INVOLVE NON-INDIAN TEACHERS IN A LEARNING PROCESS THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO PROVIDE MORE ADEQUATELY A FOUNDATION FOR THE OVERALL CURRICULUM.

RESULT: 1) GAINING OF PRIDE IN THE INDIAN RACE.

2) TEACHERS WILL GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF

INDIANS AND THEREFORE DIRECT THE LEARNING PROCESS OF THE CHILD IN MORE MEANINGFUL DIRECTIONS.

3) PARENTS WILL VIEW THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS MORE POSITIVELY AND THIS CONFIDENCE WILL REFLECT ON THEIR CHILDREN.

4) GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION WILL GROW MORE POSITIVE.

IF WE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AND IF OTHERS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND US, PROGRESS WILL BE MADE THAT WILL AFFECT THE TOTAL CANADIAN SOCIETY.

E) MATERIALS

OBJECTIVE: 1) TO PROVIDE MATERIALS A) THAT REFLECT POSITIVELY

THE INDIAN PAST AND PRESENT, B) THAT REFLECT EXPERIENCES FAMILIAR TO THE CHILD, C) THAT WILL PROVIDE FOUNDATION FOR THE EXPANSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN A PARTICULAR AREA. E.G. IN LEARNING ABOUT GOVERNMENT, THE STUDY SHOULD BEGIN BY EXAMINING INDIAN BAND GOVERNMENT. (MATERIALS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR THIS). AN UNDERSTANDING OF BAND GOVERNMENT WILL MEAN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS.

RESULT: 1) GREATER RELEVANCE OF SCHOOL PROGRAM.

2) FACILITIES MOVEMENT OF LEARNING FROM THE "KNOWN" TO THE "UNKNOWN."

CURRICULUM MATERIALS MUST REFLECT THE CHILD'S WORLD, HIS CULTURE, HIS VALUES, AND HIS EXPERIENCES.

F) ADULT STUDIES

OBJECTIVE: I) TO PROVIDE ADULTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN. THIS LEARNING MAY TAKE THE FORM OF A) OFFERINGS FROM THE HOME ECONOMICS SECTION B) OFFERINGS FROM THE MANUAL ARTS SECTION C) OFFERINGS IN BUSINESS PRACTICE D) OFFERINGS IN LEARNING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OR NATIVE LANGUAGES E) OFFERINGS IN BASIC LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS.

II) TO ENHANCE THE VIEW THAT LEARNING IS NOT A PRIVILEGE FOR ONLY THE YOUNG TO ENJOY BUT THAT LEARNING IS A LIFETIME PROCESS.

G) PRE-KINDERGARTEN STUDIES

OBJECTIVE: I) TO PROVIDE WITHIN THE SCHOOL, DAY CARE CENTRES THAT WILL BE A PART OF THE HOME ECONOMICS, MANUAL ARTS AND GUIDANCE PROGRAMS. THE BEST PEOPLE TO CONDUCT PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSES WOULD BE GRANDPARENTS WHO WOULD TEACH THE GRANDCHILDREN THE CARE OF YOUNG CHILDREN. THIS WOULD

ALLOW PARENTS TO WORK WITHIN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM AS TEACHERS AND/OR STUDENTS.

RESULTS OF E & F

1) SCHOOLS WILL BE VIEWED AS MEANINGFUL INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING OFFERINGS TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

2) THE SCHOOL WILL BECOME COMMUNITY CENTERED.

3) THE SCHOOL WILL COME TO BE VIEWED AS BELONGING TO THE COMMUNITY AND NOT TO THE TEACHERS.

4) COMMUNITY CONTROL OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM WILL BE MORE NATURAL AND MEANINGFUL.

THE COMMUNITY MUST BECOME THE CLASSROOM AND ITS MEMBERS, ITS TEACHERS. THE CLASSROOM MUST BECOME THE COMMUNITY REFLECTING THE LIVES OF ALL ITS MEMBERS.